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Subject: Microsoft Settlement

To whom it may concern:

For the past 10 years, I have watched in terrific disgust at the effect of Microsoft, Inc.'s business tactics on average American consumers. For much of this time period, I have been a casual computer purchase consultant and/or Internet development consultant. In both capacities, I have seen the process of decision making in computer hardware and software purchases.

Consumers, particularly in the field of high-technology, are incredibly swayed by the options presented to them at retail locations in their area. For more years than I wish to think about, such options were horribly limited. There was essentially one choice of operating system on one choice of platform. This is all well and good, but when the choice of Internet Service Provider and Internet browser are then thrust upon such consumers by the same provider of the operating system, the choices seem to evaporate.

When I first began using the Internet in 1994, Microsoft's Internet Explorer wasn't even in existence, of course. For many years after that, nobody would touch a non-Netscape browser. This was all well and good, just as it was fine that Microsoft dominated the computer market. But Netscape never had a true monopoly on its product, and it never took advantage of any marketplace dominance it had. As the years went by, the inclusion of Internet Explorer on Windows machines was simply too easy for people to avoid. Though virtually every person of technical computer knowledge I knew preferred Netscape, Internet Explorer somehow became the standard for Web browsing.

As an Internet developer, I struggled with the mess that Microsoft created by supporting only certain HTML standards in its Internet Explorer. Moreover, it extended the HTML command set so Web programmers could do things with their Web browser that weren't "allowed" by the HTML standard that makes the Web run. Developers found themselves having to design three different versions of the same website because of Microsoft's marketplace antics.

With the dawn of Linux, it seems as though, at least for the power users, there was some choice in operating system. Of course, Microsoft swiftly ended such hope by making sure major PC manufacturers couldn't offer any such alternative operating system and still sell Windows in addition.

All of these examples are to say nothing of the predatory business tactics that Microsoft employed to extinguish smaller software and hardware businesses that might legitimately compete with them. To be a lawyer in the high-tech industry is to know of many stories of the Microsoft bullying that

is commonplace among companies they see as a threat to them.

It is truly a farce that Microsoft purports to be a company of innovation. It is well known amongst computer buffs like myself that Microsoft has never have a creative thought in its collective corporate history. It acquires what it wants and fills in the holes. This does not create value for consumers -- it reduce what they see in the marketplace and limits them to a single provider.

Please reconsider your course of easing the punishment for Microsoft. The computer and Internet industries will only continue to spiral downward if Microsoft's antics are not swiftly defeated. Under NO circumstances should they be allowed to put their operating system or other products into the hands of consumers. Regardless of whether such products are delivered for free, it is well known that the use of these products by consumers will only further Microsoft's goal of universal adoption and continued monopolization. It MUST be a requirement that any software or computers donated as a part of the settlement must be non-Microsoft related.

Thank you,

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